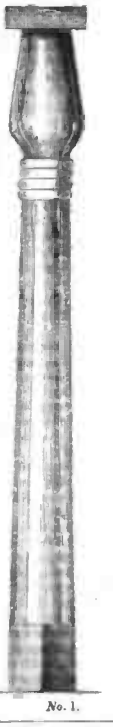
associated in his mind with a desire to rescue its antiquities from the long night of darkness in which they had remained; the expedition was therefore accompanied by a troop of "savans," whose labours have brought to light the magnificent structures which for ages had been only known by the descriptions of Herodotus and succeeding historians, but which had been looked upon mostly but as splendid fables. At the head of the list of eminent men of letters in every branch of science who were attached to the French army, we may justly place Monsieur Denon, whose magnificent work on the antiquities of Egypt is a splendid memorial of his graphic genius, patient investigation, and laborious undertaking.* From this work we shall derive most of our information, quoting occasionally from other French writers on the subject, claiming indulgence for the attempt to convey the sense of the authors, much of whose lively description must be lost by translation.

The national architecture of every country has been found to have some relation to the natural products of those countries. A leading feature in the architecture of Egypt is a close resemblance to the reed of the Nile, which formed the ornament of the shafts of the columns, the sculptures of whose capitals are imitations of plants indigenous in Egypt, as the lotus, the palm, &c.

Mr. Barry (the architect of the New Palace at Westminster), in his travels in Egypt, visited the tombs of Beni-hassan, which are excavated in the rocks on the right bank of the Nile, about forty-eight French leagues south of Kairo. In one of these tombs he found some columns supporting the roof, which seemed to account for the origin of Egyptian architecture. Mr. Barry says, "The prototype would appear to have consisted of four large reeds of the Nile placed upon an angular block, and tied together by cords near the top, forming thereby the capital. Small sticks are introduced between the reeds at the place of ligature, to render the figure of a more circular form, and afford the means of more firmly tying the whole together. The top is crowned by a square abacus, and the reeds being thereby confined, the effect of any incumbent weight upon them would be to produce the form represented in the sketch No 1."†



No. 1.

* "Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte."—Par V. Denon.

† The sketch is taken from Mr. Gwilt's edition of "Chambers' Civil Architecture."

This tomb is of very high antiquity, and allusion will be made hereafter to some columns in front of the excavations in which Mr. Barry detects a close resemblance to those of the Grecian Doric order. Sketch No. 2 is from

No. 2.

the British Museum, in which the column composed of eight reeds still more resembles a Doric column. Recent travellers have counted no less than twenty-six temples at Beni-hassan cut out of the solid rock.

The principal city of Upper Egypt was Thebes, which gave a name to the district, Thebais. I will now quote Denon. "This city, of which Homer has pictured the extent in one expression, 'Thebes of the hundred gates,' a poetical phrase which for so many ages has been repeated with confidence; described in some pages of Herodotus, who had his authority from the Egyptian priests, and since copied by other historians, celebrated for its number of kings whose wisdom caused them to be ranked as divinities, for its laws, its sciences; this sanctuary, now abandoned, isolated, and restored to the desert from which it was rescued; this city, still shrouded in its veil of mystery—seen through the obscurity of time—was still so gigantic a phantom for the imagination to dwell upon, that the army, at sight of its scattered ruins, paused at once, and by a spontaneous movement, clapped their hands, as if the occupation of the remains of this capital had been the aim of their glorious campaign, had completed the conquest of Egypt." Homer says (Iliad ix. v. 383), that Thebes could furnish 20,000 chariots of war; and Tacitus relates that when Germanicus visited its ruins (in the first century), there were seen obelisks bearing hieroglyphic inscriptions which recorded the ancient splendour of the city; from one of which a priest deciphered to him that it once contained 700,000 men capable of bearing arms. From its hundred gates, the city was called Hecatompylos, and because it was dedicated to Jupiter it had also the name of Diospolis Magna. Sesostris, who overturned the Shepherd dynasty, is said to have called Thebes after his father, Ammon No, and to have founded Diospolis on the opposite bank of the Nile, to which latter place the prophecies of Nahum, under the name of "Populous No," are believed to refer. See also Jer. xlvi. 25, and Ezek. xxx, 14, 16. It was nearly destroyed by Cambyses 525 B.C. Thus it appears that Thebes occupied both banks of the Nile (which is wider here than in any other part of Egypt), as the remains of palaces or temples are found at the villages of Luxor and Carnack on the right bank, and at Kournou and Medinet-dbou (i.e. the Town of our Father) on the other. Of these, Carnack presents the remains of one of the most astonishing productions of human genius and labour. Mr. Bardwell, in his delightful work, "Temples Ancient and Modern," considers this to be the temple of Jupiter Ammon. Before quoting the account from Denon, I will give the impression which the sight of this wondrous temple made on the minds of other writers. Sonnini says,—"We soon reached Carnack, a miserable village, whose cottages would serve to heighten the magnificence of the splendid ruins which surround them if there were any thing in the world to compare with the remains of Thebes—that famous city of antiquity, which was celebrated by Homer. It would have required more time than I had to spare, and more safety than was to be found in this soil, covered over with ruins and highway robbers, to have minutely examined relics which immortality had preserved amid the shock of ages and the rage of barbarism. It would be no less difficult to describe the sensations which the sight of objects so grand, so majestic, raised within me. It was not a simple admiration, but an ecstasy which suspended the use of all my faculties; I remained for some time immovable with rapture, and felt inclined more than once to prostrate myself in token of veneration before monuments, the rearing of which appeared to transcend the strength and genius of man." (Sonnini's Travels, vol. iii. p. 234.) Brocquet also speaks of the same temple in an animated strain:—"The works of the Egyptians were made to resist the effects of time; their statues were colossal, their columns were immense. Egypt aimed at vast objects, and sought to strike the eye at a distance, but always gratifying it by justness of proportion. Temples and palaces to this day, almost entire, where these pillars and statues are immovable, have been discovered in the Thebais. One palace above all is admired, whose remains seem to have subsisted only in order to efface the glory of all the greatest productions of human power and skill. Four allees extending farther than the eye can follow them, and terminating in each in sphinxes of a composition as rare as their size is remarkable, serve as avenues to four porticos whose height astonishes the beholder. What magnificence and what extent! A hall which apparently stood in the midst of this superb palace was supported by 120 columns of six fathoms in thickness and lofty in proportion, intermingled with obelisks which so many ages have not been able to lay low. Even colours which yield soonest to the power of time, still endure amid the ruins of this wonderful edifice and preserve their brightness, so well did Egypt know how to impress the character of immortality on all her works." (Discourse on Univ. Hist. part. iii, sec. 3.)* Upon one of the colonnades at Carnack has lately been discovered the name of Sesonthis, who, according to Blair, flourished 874 B.C. We will now return to Denon, who says—"This is the grandest monument in Egypt. Situated three or four hundred toises from the banks of the Nile, its principal entrance is directed from W. to E.; two grand colossal forms, of which only the pedestals remain, stood before the door, flanked by two enormous *mâles* 140 feet long, which were never finished. Behind is a large court 110 feet long, and the same in breadth, divided in two by an avenue of twelve columns; on the left is a covered gallery with small cells, on the right a private edifice, which resembles a palace more than any other part of the building, having a separate door, an inner court decorated with a gallery, behind which is a suite of rooms and a lateral gallery, conducting to the great portico: at the end of the first court are two other *mâles*, but no large as the first, in front of which also are two colossal figures, of which the trunks remain; beyond these is the portico which is the most extraordinary monument of Egyptian magnificence. In the centre of this court is a double row of columns, forty in all, 11 feet (French measure; the Paris foot is equal to 12⅔ inches English) in diameter (the columns of the Parthenon are only 6 feet 3 inches, and of Mars Ultor, at Rome, 6 feet), and on each side were five rows of forty columns, 7 feet in diameter." The centre avenue rose higher than its side porticos, carrying an attic or upper story. "One is more than surprised at such magnificence; one is humiliated at the comparison of our

* The splendid illustrations of Mr. David Roberts are probably the best calculated to convey an idea of the wonderful temples of Egypt.

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